

Freedom Watch

February 12, 2003 ♦ Published in the interest of those serving in Operation Enduring Freedom ♦ Bagram, Afghanistan

EOD destroys UXOs

Maintains safety as Bagram expands

By Pfc. Charles D. Meseke
CTF-82 PAO

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — Soldiers of the 705th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, with the help of airmen of the 175th Expeditionary Force Squadron and soldiers of Estonian forces, detonated unexploded ordnance yesterday at a demolition range located near Bagram Air Base.

Approximately 300 pounds of various types of unexploded mortars, fuses, rockets, and large caliber ammunition were destroyed as part of the 705th's ongoing mis-

sion to clear Bagram of unexploded ordnance.

"As the base expands we are finding more and more ordnance that needs to be destroyed," said Capt. Donald R. Weakley, commander of the 705th.

Much of the ordnance found in the Bagram area was left behind by Soviet Union forces that occupied the airfield more than a decade ago, Weakley said.

The 705th conducts disposals of materials collected at Bagram about once every two weeks.

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Afghan born, American bred

Pfc. Christina Carde
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — It was Sept. 11, 2001. Word spread like wildfire across the world that the twin towers had been destroyed. Sayed Habib Abedi, sat in his San Diego office dumbfounded and heartbroken. Born in Afghanistan but now an American citizen, the terror of what was happening was more real to Abedi than perhaps any native-born American.

As the twin towers burned to the ground on his television screen, 60-year-old Abedi pondered all of the events in his life that brought him to the U.S. He remembered a time when Afghanistan was serene and peaceful and his childhood dream of becoming a U.S. citizen.

"Afghanistan was a beautiful country," said Abedi. "Kabul was full of restaurants and hotels, and it attracted almost 200,000 tourists every year. Women were as free as men to travel on their own and there was hardly ever any hostility toward foreigners."

Upon graduation from Habibia High School in 1960, Abedi was ready to pursue his dream of going to the states.

"I studied economics at the University of Kabul for a year, but I wasn't happy," said Abedi. "I left my home in 1961 for Europe to apply

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Photo by Pfc. Debralee P. Crankshaw

Mine detection...

Pvt. 2 Pedro Rico-Boese, combat engineer, Company C, 27th Engineer Battalion, trains with a mine detector on a mine lane. The 27th is training with poker chips to identify where the detector picks up a signal. In an actual situation they would use spray paint. Each platoon in the 27th is going through the lane training. They go through three days of training with one day of classroom, one day in the training lanes and the third off base.

World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



Osama bin Laden

Bin Laden tape a call to arms

DOHA, Qatar — A voice purported to be that of Osama bin Laden Tuesday issued a call to arms for Muslims to fight against any U.S.-led invasion of Iraq and offered battle strategies aimed at causing the highest number of American casualties.

The 16-minute message believed to be from the al-Qaida leader was broadcast on the Qatar-based, Arabic-language network Al-Jazeera.

"We want to let you know and confirm to you that this war of the infidels that the U.S. is leading with its allies ... we are with you and we will fight in the name of God," the speaker said.

"Our brothers the mujahedeen in Iraq, don't worry about America's lies and their powers and their military might," he said. "We also advise you to drag the forces into fighting you in street fights. Take them into farms, into cities, and fight them in there ... they will be losing a lot of lives."

U.S. officials said the tape does seem to be from bin Laden, and that a technical analysis will be done. Officials also said this tape was of much better quality than the previous one presumed to be from bin Laden, which Al-Jazeera broadcast in November. A U.S. analysis of that tape concluded it extremely likely the tape was authentic.

Word of the tape first emerged earlier in the day when U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell told a Senate panel a new message

had surfaced believed to be bin Laden claiming he is "in partnership with Iraq."

But while the broadcast message declared solidarity with Iraqis, it made no mention of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and even denounced his socialist Baath party as "infidels."

Anti-aircraft missiles deployed

WASHINGTON — Military vehicles with anti-aircraft missiles have been deployed around Washington, and fighter jet patrols over the nation's capital and New York have been increased as a result of the elevated threat of terrorist attack, Pentagon officials told CNN on Tuesday.

It's the first deployment of "Avenger" air-defense systems since September, when Humvees outfitted with ground-to-air Stinger missiles were deployed with Sentinel radars around the Pentagon and other military installations. The "Avenger" is a portable, short-range air-defense system mounted on a Humvee that can rapidly fire eight Stinger missiles.

The steps come as security across the nation is being raised. On Friday, President Bush's Homeland Security Council raised the national threat level from yellow to orange. Orange indicates a "high" risk of terrorist attack, and yellow indicates an "elevated" risk.

In addition, patrols by fighter aircraft that have been in place for months over Washington and New York have been stepped up as a precaution, officials said. Also in response to the heightened alert, the U.S. Customs Service has increased its Black Hawk helicopter surveillance patrols over Washington.

As of last month, the helicopters typically flew between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. Officials tell CNN that the patrols are now being conducted around the clock.

Shuttle investigators make call for more photos

JOHNSON SPACE CENTER, Texas — The Columbia Accident Investigation Board asked people across the country Tuesday to continue sending photographs and video

of the space shuttle streaking across the sky.

Investigators plan to piece together a multi-layered image of the final moments of the orbiter's disastrous February 1 flight home.

In their first news conference, members of the CAIB, led by retired Adm. Hal Gehman, said investigators are combining all of the authentic videos with accurate time stamps, radar data and incoming data from the shuttle to complete a "stereoscopic visualization" of what went wrong with Columbia.

"What we are doing is building a great mosaic in which we are combining various video products ... along with the telemetry data and radar observations into a fairly sophisticated audio, visual and telemetry reconstruction from the time the orbiter Columbia crossed the coast until we lost the signal," Gehman said.

Israel shuts West Bank, Gaza

JERUSALEM — The Israeli defense minister has ordered troops to close the West Bank and Gaza, a ministry source told CNN on Monday.

The restriction was intended to prevent terrorist attacks against Israeli citizens and will remain in place four days, the source said. That means Palestinians will be unable to enter Israel, where thousands of them work.

The decision was made at 10 p.m. (3 p.m. EST), the source told CNN.

Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz had told the Israeli Cabinet on Sunday that he would ease restrictions during Eid Al-Adha — a three-day Muslim holiday commemorating Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son at God's command — that begins Tuesday.

But Mofaz reversed himself Monday night because he had received several intelligence reports indicating that suicide attacks and other forms of violence were planned against Israeli civilians, the source said.

The source said four Palestinians were arrested Monday on their way to commit terrorist acts against Israelis. No immediate comment was available from the Palestinians or from the Israel Defense Forces.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Adam Johnston, 455th Expeditionary Operations Group

This hog's a little hotter than a Harley...

Air Force Lt. Col. Dan (left) of the 104th Fighter Squadron explains the capabilities of a Maverick missile on an A-10 Thunderbolt II Warthog from the 455th Expeditionary Operations Group to Tech. Sgt. Donald Richardson, a heating and ventilation technician with the 682nd Air Support Operations Squadron on the A-10 ramp Monday. A-10 pilots here are conducting tours of the Warthog on Mondays and Fridays for residents of Air Force Village to better understand the mission and capabilities of the A-10 in Afghanistan. Richardson is normally assigned to the 111th Air Support Operations Center at Camp Murray, Wa. Dan is homebased with the 175th Fighter Wing of the Maryland Air National Guard

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for U.S. citizenship. I spent 10 months there before I was granted residency in the U.S.”

After 18 years of dreaming of the states from thousands of miles away, Abedi took his first breath of American air at LaGuardia Airport, New York City, in 1962.

“It was everything I expected it to be and more,” said Abedi with a smile. “The strange thing was I didn’t feel like a foreigner. I knew exactly what to do and how to act. I knew then, this was my new home.”

After his arrival in the U.S., Abedi found an interest that would become his career.

“I was given an offer to attend the American Flyers Aviation School in Oklahoma,” said Abedi. “I quickly accepted the offer and graduated in 1964 as a pilot.”

It was then Abedi decided it was time to go home and settle down.

“I spent the next 16 years in Afghanistan flying for Afghan Air,” said Abedi. “I got married to an Afghan woman and had three boys. Then things started to take a turn for the worse.”

In 1979, a dark cloud fell over the peace and prosperity of Afghanistan with the invasion of the Russians.

“I only stayed for six or seven months after the Russians started pouring in,” said Abedi as the smile disappeared from his face. “I remember (the Russians) as half starved selling all of their belongings for a piece of bread. Luckily, I managed to escape back to the states.”

That would be the last time Abedi would see Afghanistan for almost 23 years.

“We moved to San Diego,” said Abedi. “We watched the news and felt bad for our people, but we were happy our children didn’t have to suffer through that.”

In the states, Abedi maintained his occupation as a pilot. He flew for an African Airline for 10 years, spent a few years in Europe and then returned back to the states.

As the years went by, Abedi hung up his



Abedi

wings and looked for other employment.

“I worked in a law firm for a while and then finally stabilized at an engineer firm in San Diego in 1998,” he said.

Then, just as a horrible event caused him to leave Afghanistan, another would compel him to return once again in 2001.

“When I heard my country was responsible for the events of Sept. 11, I was disappointed and astonished. It hurt to think the two countries I called home would be going to war. Still, I knew I had to help somehow.”

“I heard from the Federal Bureau of Investigation that the U.S. military was looking for people who spoke Dari,” said Abedi. “I applied for the job and just that soon I was on my way to Georgia to receive my uniform, military issue and duty position. Then, I was on my way back to the motherland.”

With a lump in his throat and tears in his eyes, Abedi described what he saw as he set foot in his country for the first time in over two decades.

“I wept,” said Abedi. “It was not the same Afghanistan I remembered. The faces of the people reflected years of war, torture and sadness. My heart went out to them.”

However, something had changed in Abedi over the past 23 years.

“Afghanistan was the land of my birth, but no longer my home or to whom I pledged my loyalty. I was an American, and I was here to represent the U.S.”

Abedi began work as a translator in 2001 for Lt. Gen. Dan McNeill, Combined Joint Task Force-180 commander, and now for Col. Christopher Pritchett, Bagram Air Base commander.

He travels all over Afghanistan with Col. Pritchett translating for the U.S. government.

“Everywhere I go, these people see my skin and hear my language and think they can obtain special favors because I am an Afghan,” said Abedi. “I always tell them that even though I was born and raised here, I am an American and I am loyal to this flag on my uniform. America is my home now and it will always be.”

Now, at age 62, Abedi says the only dream he never lived was to become a U.S. soldier. “I would like to join the Army but I think my age is against me now. I will settle for a job in the Department of State if they’ll have me, but I’ll go wherever my country needs me.”



Photo by Pfc. Debralee P. Crankshaw

Sgt. Cesar Soto, explosive ordnance team member, 705th Explosive Ordnance Company, places C-4 into the Talon robot grip.

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This collection of explosive materials shows that even within the confines of Bagram that service members should be on alert for unexploded ordnance and mines, Weakly said.

“Be aware of the danger, people around Bagram are getting hurt picking up things that are explosives, or from stepping off roads,” Weakly said.

There are many visual aids and mine awareness displays posted throughout Bagram to help the 705th in their mission to prevent injury from mines and unexploded ordnance.

“People have a tendency to discount what they see isn’t ordnance and make a decision that something isn’t hazardous,” said Maj. Charles G. Phillips, operations officer of the 184th EOD battalion.

The 184th EOD Bn. commands the 705th EOD Co.

“People finding ordnance may feel afraid of looking stupid if what they find turns out not to be ordnance,” Phillips said.

This type of reasoning is strongly cautioned against by EOD units.

“When finding something suspicious, do the right thing and give (EOD) a call,” Weakly added.

The disposal of the ordnance was viewed as a successful mission. “Whenever an EOD team protects personnel, property, and themselves from explosives, we have been successful,” Phillips said.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: “Edward Scissorhands.” An artificial man with scissors for hands lives completely alone until a local woman befriends him and brings him home.

Tomorrow’s movie will be “A River Runs Through It.”



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Thursday
Bagram:	Partly cloudy H: 54F L: 25F	Haze H: 50F L: 30F
Kandahar:	Mostly cloudy H: 70F L: 41F	Haze H: 68F L: 37F
Kabul:	Haze H: 46F L: 28F	Fog H: 46F L: 25F
Uzbekistan:	Mostly cloudy H: 57F L: 36F	Isolated rain H: 50F L: 29F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from ESPN.com)

Ten things to watch in second half

ESPN — Ten weeks left in the regular season.

Ten things on our radar as we count those 10 weeks down:

1. West playoff seedings. Of particular interest, of course, is where the Lakers land, but also the Trail Blazers. Portland contends that its back-to-back first-round exits look worse than they really are because it had to play L.A. both times.

2. East playoff seedings. The focus figures to be on the lower reaches of the top eight, with Michael Jordan's Washington Wizards clinging to the last spot and Tracy McGrady's one-man Orlando Magic down to ninth and Allen Iverson's Sixers still trying to reverse a 10-20 slide. The preference here is to track the jockeying at the top, where three teams tussle for No. 1 and the two clubs that miss out fated to meet in Round 2 of the playoffs.

3. Trading deadline. It's just over a week away, so the window for a blockbuster is gradually narrowing. Coming out of the All-Star break, the names in the news are the same names we've heard for



The Blazers' reward might be another first-round date with Shaq.

weeks: Stromile Swift, Derrick Coleman, Steve Smith, Danny Fortson, Austin Croshere and Theo Ratliff.

4. Coaching futures. The list of coaches with uncertain futures includes at least five guys: New Orleans' Paul Silas in the last year of his contract; Atlanta's Terry Stotts and Cleveland's Keith Smart from the interim ranks; and new additions Larry Brown (by his own admission) of Philadelphia and Chicago's Bill Cartwright.

5. MVP race. What's so tasty is that there isn't a clear-cut favorite. McGrady and Minnesota's Kevin Garnett have to be rated highly given their individual brilliance. Kobe Bryant, no matter how many people say he's not even the MVP of his own team, has to get votes if he continues to put the Lakers on his back. Sacramento's Chris Webber had arguably nosed past San Antonio's Tim Duncan and just about everyone else before injuring his ankle, but lately the Spurs have surged..

6. Rookie of the Year race. Just the opposite. It's a two-man game, with apologies to the improving Caron Butler in Miami. It's the Rockets' Yao Ming vs. the Suns' Amare Stoudemire, with he who fades least standing as the favorite. Our slight edge, coming out of the break, goes to Yao.

7. Injury-tortured souls. Vince Carter's All-Star firestorm has passed, but he still has to get his knees through the rest of the season in Toronto. New York's Antonio McDyess will be tempted to test his bad knee before the season is over but definitely shouldn't. Marcus Camby is scarcely farther along than Dice, having appeared in only one game for Denver because of hip and ankle trouble.

8. New playoff format. Doesn't seem right to be changing things in the middle of the season. However ... if the switch to best-of-sevens all the way through the playoffs means that the first round alone won't last a month, how can anyone complain?

9. Summertime. That's when we get to see who winds up with LeBron James (and Darko Milicic), whether Gary Payton will really (finally) leave Seattle, and what the Spurs (Duncan, specifically) do to try to convince Kidd to leave Jersey.

10. Theories. If the Lakers continue to rise toward the top half of the West and make their usual playoff march, you will undoubtedly hear the theory — not ours, so believe at your own peril — that Shaq's toe surgery was delayed to put the team in such a hole that the climb out couldn't be boring. If the Kings can get healthy, which hasn't happened yet this season, the theory we claim as our own is that Sacramento is the only team in the league no longer psyched-out by L.A.



2002 NBA standings

Eastern Conference

Atlantic

(2) New Jersey	36-16
(4) Boston	27-22
(7) Philadelphia	25-24
(8) Orlando	25-26
Washington	24-25

Central

(1) Indiana	35-15
(3) Detroit	33-15
(5) New Orleans	27-24
(6) Milwaukee	25-23
Atlanta	19-31

Western Conference

Midwest

(1) Dallas	38-11
(3) San Antonio	33-16
(5) Minnesota	30-20
(6) Utah	29-20
(8) Houston	26-22

Pacific

(2) Sacramento	34-17
(4) Portland	32-16
(7) Phoenix	29-21
L.A. Lakers	24-23
Golden State	22-27



T-Wolves barely edge Mavericks

MINNEAPOLIS — Wally Szczerbiak made a corner jumper as the final buzzer sounded after Minnesota squandered a 17-point third-quarter lead Tuesday night, giving the Timberwolves a 100-98 victory over the Dallas Mavericks.

Szczerbiak, who had 21 points, came off a screen on an inbounds play with 1.6 seconds left and nailed his shot from 17 feet to give the Timberwolves their 10th straight home victory.

Dirk Nowitzki had 34 points and Michael Finley had all 21 of his points in the second half for Dallas, which had its four-game road



Kevin Garnett, right, and Dirk Nowitzki squared off Tuesday.

winning streak snapped.

The Mavericks, who trailed by as many as 19 in the first half, led 98-95 on a basket by Nowitzki with 1:35 remaining. Kevin Garnett — who had 26 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists — converted a three-point play to tie the game with 1:17 left.

Dallas had three chances to take the lead, and Minnesota had three of its own — finally seizing it on Szczerbiak's shot.

McGrady scores game-high 32 points

ORLANDO, Fla. — Tracy McGrady had 32 points and eight rebounds and Orlando withstood a late rally defeat the New Jersey Nets 92-83 Tuesday night.

The Magic began the fourth quarter with a 15-2 run, opening a 12-point lead, then held on down the stretch with Darrell Armstrong delivering a clutch 3-point shot and Pat Garrity adding a three-point play after the Nets cut their deficit to 83-81 with 1:40 to go.

The loss was just the second in eight games for the Nets, who won three straight going into the All-Star break for a share of the best record in the East with the Indiana Pacers.

McGrady made 12 of 25 shots. Armstrong finished with 20 points and five assists, and Mike Miller had 11 points for the Magic, who stopped a three-game losing streak.

Black History Month

February is Black History Month. In light of all the accomplishments made by African-Americans, every day this month the *Freedom Watch* will highlight an individual.

Jewel Plummer Cobb, *biologist, physiologist*

Born: 1/17/1924 **Birthplace:** Chicago, Ill.

Jewel Plummer Cobb has had wide-ranging influence in the sciences. Awarded a Ph.D. in cell physiology from New York University in 1950, she has served as a researcher, a college professor and administrator, as well as a staunch supporter for greater minority participation in scientific careers. Much of Cobb's research has been focused on the skin pigment melanin, and her most significant research has been with testing new chemotherapeutic drugs in cancer cells, the impact of which continues. She has held several teaching and administrative positions at major universities. From 1960 to 1969, she was a professor at Sarah Lawrence College. From 1969 to 1976 she served as Dean and Professor of Zoology at Connecticut College. From 1976 to 1981, Cobb served as Dean and Professor of Biology at Douglass College, the women's college at Rutgers University. From 1981 to 1990 Cobb was President of California State University at Fullerton where she spearheaded efforts to increase the quality and diversity of both the student population and the faculty. A supporter of equal access to educational and professional opportunity, Cobb has written often about racial and sexual discrimination in the sciences, and has raised funds to allow more minorities to enter into the field. Since her retirement, Cobb, who was named President and Professor of Biological Science, Emerita at California State University at Fullerton and Trustee Professor at California State University at Los Angeles, has continued her research.



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By Kevin Kilgore

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